

Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

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FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5005

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUCHAREST 6149

FOR AID/W

DEPT FOR INR

E.O. 116552: GDS
TAGS: EAID, SWEL, RO
SUBJECT: EARTHQUAKE RECOVERY

REF: (A) BUCHAREST 6133, (B) BUCHAREST 5070, (C) BUCHAREST 4331,
(D) STATE 154398

1. JULY 8 MEETING OF POLITICAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ADDRESSED,
AMONG OTHERS, TOPIC OF BUILDING REPAIRS FOLLOWING MARCH 4
EARTHQUAKE. SCINTEA REPORTED JULY 9 ON THE MEETING, SAYING
POLE/COM EXAMINED A CRUCIAL REPORT FROM BUCHAREST WHICH HIT
DEFICIENCIES IN REPAIR WORK. UNJUSTIFIED DEMOLITION AND
EXCESSIVE REPAIRS GOING BEYOND FUNCTIONAL NEEDS WERE SINGLED OUT.
FAULT WAS PINNED ON POOR LABOR MANAGEMENT WHICH WAS SAID TO
DISRUPT CIVILIAN AND COMMERCIAL LIFE AND LEAD TO DISCOURAGEMENT
OF INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE IN REPAIR OF PERSONAL DWELLINGS.

2. ANOTHER REPORT CRITICIZED THE SLOWING RATE OF REPAIR WORK
IN PROVINCIAL (JUDET) DAMAGE SITES, AND DIMINISHING ATTENTION
TO PROPER LABOR MOBILIZATION. POLEXCOM CONSEQUENTLY "ESTABLISHED"
THAT EFFORTS WOULD HENCEFORTH BE CONCENTRATED ON COMPLETION OF
STRUCTURAL REPAIRS AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF INDIVIDUALS TO
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REPAIR THEIR OWN DWELLINGS. POLE/COM FURTHER "DECIDED"
THAT ALL "CONSOLIDATION" (I.E. STRUCTURAL REPAIRS) SHOULD BE
COMPLETED BY END OF YEAR.

3. EMBASSY HAS SUBSEQUENTLY COPY OF A MINISTERIAL- LEVEL
"DISPOSITIE" (INTERNAL MEMORANDUM) WHICH SHEDS FURTHER LIGHT ON
MOOD PERVAING POLEXCOM'S DECISION. THE DOCUMENT, DATED JULY 8,

IS UNADDRESSED BUT SEEMS INTENDED AS GUIDANCE TO CONSTRUCTION INSTITUTES AND MANAGERS. MINISTER-SECRETARY OF STATE MIRCEA GEORGESCU (HEAD OF STATE GENERAL INSPECTORATE FOR INVESTMENTS AND CONSTRUCTIONS) AND VALERIU CRISTESCU (DIRECTOR, CENTRAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT IN CONSTRUCTION) SIGNED THE DISPOZITIE, WHICH ANNOUNCES THAT "CONSOLIDATION" OF DAMAGED BUILDINGS SHALL BE STRICTLY CONFINED TO THE DAMAGED ELEMENTS AND OTHER ESSENTIALS. IT ALSO EXCLUDES SUPPLEMENTARY ANTI-SEISMIC MEASURES IN ANY REPAIR WORK, AND ANNULS ALL PREVIOUS INSTRUCTIONS IN CONFLICT WITH THE ABOVE.

4. COMMENT: THESE ACTIONS ARE CONSISTENT WITH ROMANIAN DRIVE TO ERASE THE EARTHQUAKE DAMAGE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE AND MINIMIZE ECONOMIC LOSSES. THEY ALSO REVEAL BELATED RECOGNITION OF THE STATE'S INABILITY TO COPE WITH EXTENSIVE DAMAGE TO PRIVATE HOUSING. CONTRARY TO CEAUSESCU'S FIRST INDICATIONS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL HOUSING REPAIRS, PRIVATE OWNERS ARE NOW GIVEN CLEAR SIGN THEY MUST COPE ON THEIR OWN AND THAT CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS AND LABOR FOR WORK ON BUILDINGS WOULD BE LIMITED TO EARTHQUAKE RELATED DAMAGE.

5. THE OVERWELMING BALANCE OF US AID TO ROMANIA HAS BEEN FOCUSED ON LONGER TERM RECOVERY. AS PART OF US ASSISTANCE, HOWEVER, AID DID SEND BUILDING REPAIR TEAM (REF B) TO EVALUATE OPTIMUM REPAIR TECHNIQUES MANY OF WHICH COULD BE APPLIED IMMEDIATELY. TEAM'S REPORT INCLUDED
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PERTINENT OBSERVATION THAT SIMPLE ARRAY OF BASIC HAND TOOLS WHICH COULD BE ACQUIRED THROUGH AID EMERGENCY FUND WOULD GREATLY SPEED REPAIR WORK AT MINIMUM EXPENSE. SINCE GEORGESCU HIMSELF APPEARED TO AGREE, IT IS PARADOXICAL, AT LEAST AT THIS MOMENT, IN LIGHT OF PARA 2-4, THAT ROMANIAN CONSTRUCTION TEAM (REFS A AND C) HAS POSTPONED EXPECTED US VISIT UNTIL SEPTEMBER 15. IN ANY CASE WE WOULD APPRECIATE STATUS REPORT ON AID TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING EPOXY AND HAND TOOLS COMPONENTS, AND DISTRIBUTION COPIES OF TEAM'S FINAL (FORMAL) REPORT. ALSO REQUEST STATUS REPORT ON SHIPMENT OF EQUIPMENT SELECTED BY GOR PROCUREMENT TEAM (REF C).
BARNES

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 17-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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Disposition History: n/a
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